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## A Part of the Gospel of Matthew from the Beirût Syriac Codex

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THE Syriac manuscript of the New Testament belonging to the Syrian Protestant College at Beirût and preserved in the library of Union Theological Seminary, New York, has long been known to exhibit in the Gospels a text decidedly different from the Peshitto.<sup>1</sup> Professor Isaac H. Hall, who was the first to draw attention to the manuscript and who has been the chief, if not the sole, worker upon it, early detected its kinship with the Harklensian. He maintained that it represented a revision earlier than White's Harklensian, and probably identical with the lost Philoxenian. The Philoxenian version, said to have been made in 508 A.D., is the only one among the five Syriac versions of which no gospel-manuscript has yet been identified, so that the claim put forth by Professor Hall for the Beirût Codex is an important one. Whether Professor Hall's impression of the character of the text is warranted, can only be determined by the examination of the text itself; hence the propriety of making at least a part of it accessible to students of the Syriac versions is obvious.

Professor Gwynn has recently assigned to the Philoxenian version the Syriac Apocalypse published by himself from a Crawford manuscript of the twelfth century, and the four epistles published by Pococke in 1630.<sup>2</sup> He characterizes

<sup>1</sup> Aside from the Gospels the text of the manuscript is Peshitto.

<sup>2</sup> John Gwynn, *The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version hitherto Unknown*, 1897.

them as "a successful presentation of the Greek original in a Syriac version of adequate exactness, without sacrifice of idiomatic purity" (p. cv); and further says: "In strong contrast with it [the Harklensian Apocalypse], our version is seen to aim at accuracy in substance rather than in form; its diction, as regards grammar as well as vocabulary, to be vernacular Syriac of the best period; its manner to combine idiomatic freedom with truthful reproduction of the original" (p. xxxv). The Philoxenian version has not always been so understood; and, in any case, it is likely that in those parts for which Syriac forms already existed, in the Peshitto, it exhibited a treatment somewhat less free and untrammelled than in those parts, like the Apocalypse, of which it gave the first Syriac rendering. A different attitude toward these late versions has been assumed by Hugo Gressmann, who holds that in the Syriac Gospels published by White in 1778, we have neither the Philoxenian text, as White himself supposed, nor the Harklensian, as has been generally held of late years.<sup>3</sup>

Should the text of the Beirût codex, however, disappoint the claims of its discoverer, and prove to be but a Harklensian witness, its value will still be considerable. Professor Hort and Professor Gregory have both pointed out the need of further examination of manuscripts of the Harklensian version, in order to the better understanding and surer reconstruction of its text;<sup>4</sup> and to this, at all events, the publication of an extended section of the text of the Beirût manuscript may contribute. Ceriani, to whom Professor Hall submitted several leaves, found its text better than that published by White in 1778 and usually reckoned the standard Harklensian.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it needs but a hasty inspection of the Gospels of the manuscript to disclose the marked resemblance of the text to the Harklensian.

<sup>3</sup> Hugo Gressman, "Studien zum syrischen Tetraevangelium. I." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, v. pp. 248-252.

<sup>4</sup> Westcott and Hort, *New Testament in Greek*, vol. ii. Introduction, p. 156; C. R. Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments*, vol. ii. p. 524.

<sup>5</sup> *JBL*, 1882, p. 4.

The manuscript was announced by Professor Hall, and the first account of it published, in 1877, in the London *Academy*, vol. ii. p. 170, and in the New York *Independent* of Aug. 23. A rather full description of the manuscript was presented by him to the American Oriental Society in October of the same year, and subsequently published in the Proceedings.<sup>6</sup> At that time a committee was appointed to consider the publication of the manuscript. Further notes upon it from Professor Hall appear in the Proceedings of 1879<sup>7</sup> and 1882.<sup>8</sup> His estimate of the worth of the text is set forth in his "Notes on the Beirût Syriac Codex," read before the Society of Biblical Literature in 1882.<sup>9</sup>

Scrivener, in his *Plain Introduction*,<sup>10</sup> appears to refer to a further publication of Professor Hall's upon the manuscript, "Syriac Manuscript Gospels of a Pre-Harklensian Version, Acts and Epistles of the Peshitto Version, . . . by the Monk John, . . . Described with phototyped Facsimiles by Professor Isaac H. Hall [viii-ix], ff. 219 + a fragment at end," etc., and from him the title seems to have been taken over into Nestle's *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*,<sup>11</sup> but Scrivener's reference here is only to certain prefatory pages which Professor Hall had printed to serve as description and introduction to the manuscript when bound, and of which he seems to have distributed a few copies.<sup>12</sup> The manuscript has not 219 foll. + a fragment, however, but 203, as the other published descriptions correctly state.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. x. 1877, pp. cxlvi-cxlix. The reference to pp. xvi ff. given by Professor Hall in *JBL*, 1882, p. 1, and by Professor Gregory in *Prolegomena*, p. 829, and *Textkritik*, vol. ii. p. 524, is misleading.

<sup>7</sup> *JAOS*, vol. xi. p. vi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* vol. xi. p. cvii.

<sup>9</sup> Isaac H. Hall, "Notes on the Beirût Syriac Codex," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1882, pp. 1-26.

<sup>10</sup> Fourth (Edward Miller's) edition, 1894, vol. ii. p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> P. 100.

<sup>12</sup> Scrivener mentions one as sent to him, and there is a copy in the library of the Harvard Divinity School.

<sup>13</sup> The inaccuracies in Scrivener's references to the manuscript in his third

What is undertaken in the following pages is the publication of the text of a part of the manuscript large enough fairly to exhibit its quality and character—a thing which Professor Hall, with all his work upon it, does not seem to have done. The part selected is the first twenty pages of the Gospel of Matthew, as preserved in the manuscript (12<sup>20</sup>–13<sup>23</sup>, 13<sup>57</sup>–17<sup>20</sup>, and 19<sup>12</sup>–22<sup>16</sup>), and the text is exhibited, not indeed in facsimile, but in a line-for-line transcript, unaltered by editing or correction. Thus the pointing of the manuscript and the lectionary indications are reproduced in the published text. These lectionary notes, written in red in the manuscript, are here enclosed in half brackets [ ], and thus distinguished from the text proper. The manuscript has been fully described elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> It is only necessary to say here that it is a parchment codex of 203 leaves, measuring 18 by 26 cm. These leaves are gathered in quires of five, and inscribed in two columns. The manuscript is believed to come from Tur-abdin, and is assigned to the ninth century. It originally contained the Syriac New Testament; that is, it lacked the four disputed epistles and the Apocalypse. It is only in the Gospels, however, that its text differs from the Peshitto. It will be seen that a leaf is missing after fol. 2, and another after fol. 6.

The writer's especial thanks are due Mr. D. Stuart Dodge, of New York City, for kindly placing the manuscript in his hands for study and partial publication.

edition, 1883, pp. 327, 328, were observed by Professor Ezra Abbot, and have been pointed out by Professor J. H. Thayer in "Notes on Scrivener's *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, Third Edition; chiefly from the memoranda of the late Ezra Abbot," *Andover Review*, vol. iii. 1885, Critical Appendix.

<sup>14</sup> Gregory, *loc. cit.*; Scrivener, *loc. cit.*













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